

HETEROTHECA SUBAXILLARIS ON LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK.—The New York International Airport in Queens County, Long Island, New York is apparently the northernmost station for *Heterotheca subaxillaris* (Lam.) Britt. & Rusby.

The writer first observed the species at this locality in the late summer of 1950, its weedy annual or biennial yellow ray-flowered plants amassed in large ribbon-like colonies along the access and service roads and the airstrips of the nearly five thousand acres of dry sandy reclaimed salt marsh which constitute the terrain of this vast air terminus. Observations over three subsequent growing seasons indicate these colonies are well-established and increasing.

Fernald<sup>1</sup> indicates that the original range of *H. subaxillaris* would seem to have been Florida to Arizona and Mexico, having spread northeastwardly to Delaware long ago (and northwardly to Kansas). Yet it was only in 1939 that the same author<sup>2</sup> collected in Isle of Wight County, Virginia the first specimen of *H. subaxillaris* to be recorded from between North Carolina and Maryland. Perhaps this is more a picture of incomplete reporting than of actual distribution. Gleason<sup>3</sup> cites a specimen taken from ballast in Philadelphia in 1864. Tatnall<sup>4</sup> observed that the species was well established in southern New Jersey (near Philadelphia) in 1946, and ventured the opinion that the species was apparently spreading rapidly northward. The present writer's collection ninety miles to the northeast may bear out this suggestion. In 1953, several plants were seen just outside the perimeter of the airport. In view of the abundant local ecological conditions favorable to this xerophyte, and taking into account its windborn achenes, the spread of *H. subaxillaris* eastward on Long Island, and perhaps even farther north on the Coastal Plain should be watched for.

The possible source of *H. subaxillaris* on Long Island is a matter of some interest. In attempting to hold the shifting sands of the New York International Airport, the Port Authority engineers planted thousands of tufts of beach grass obtained from various sources, only one of which, in Delaware,

<sup>1</sup> FERNALD, M. L. 1950. Gray's Manual of Botany, 8th edition. p. 1378.

<sup>2</sup> FERNALD, M. L. 1939. RHODORA 41: 469, 571.

<sup>3</sup> GLEASON, H. A. 1952. The New Britton & Brown Illustrated Flora. vol. 3, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup> TATNALL, R. R. 1946. Flora of Delaware and the Eastern Shore, p. 256.



lies within the usual range for this species. Years ago, before the area was altered for its present purpose, it bore the name of "Idlewild", and it was a popular botanizing station with local enthusiasts, who visited it to see many fine specimens of the beautiful Yellow-fringed Orchid, *Habenaria ciliaris* (L.) R. Br., a species even then doomed in the metropolitan area. Idlewild Point was noteworthy as the only American station for the typical *Elymus arenarius* L.<sup>5</sup> and it would be interesting to revisit the spot to check for this species. Adventitious plants other than *H. subaxillaris* may be expected to appear on the altered Idlewild site, which may serve to respark the area as an interesting botanical workground.

The most diagnostic characteristic of *H. subaxillaris* in the field is the strong camphorous odor emitted by bruised tissue. This is a fact which generally seems to be passed over in the literature, but it is singular enough to immediately separate it in the field from any other plant it might superficially resemble, such as species of *Chrysopsis*. It is this attribute which gives the common name of "Camphorweed" to the plant, surely a far more apt designation than "Golden Aster," which should be strictly limited to species of *Chrysopsis*.

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Joseph Monachino of the New York Botanical Garden Herbarium for verifying his identifications and for other very helpful services. A sheet verifying this record has been deposited in the herbarium there and a duplicate is deposited in the herbarium of Tackapausha Preserve of Nassau County, Seaford, New York.  
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<sup>5</sup> MONACHINO, J. 1941. *Torreyia* 3: 97–99.

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